



Connecticut Farm Bureau Association

775 Bloomfield Ave., Windsor, CT 06095-2322

® (860) 768-1100 • Fax (860) 768-1108 • www.cfba.org

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Testimony in support of: Raised Bill No. 5516 AN ACT PROVIDING FOOD ENTREPRENEURS WITH ACCESS TO COMMERCIAL KITCHENS.

Submitted by: Henry N. Talmage, Executive Director, Connecticut Farm Bureau Association

The following testimony is submitted on behalf of the Connecticut Farm Bureau, a statewide nonprofit membership organization of over 5,000 families dedicated to farming and the future of Connecticut agriculture.

Senator LeBeau, Representative Perone and Members of the Commerce Committee:

The Connecticut Farm Bureau Association supports Raised Bill 5516 which would authorize the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development to establish a competitive grant program to encourage the development or expansion of a kitchen incubator for food entrepreneurs. One of the key strategies for the growth of Connecticut agriculture is to vertically integrate our raw agricultural products into more value-added products. Farmers and local food enthusiasts have recognized that the local food movement has created opportunities to not only grow more food but to create more packaged and processed foods for local consumers. Most of these value-added products require the use of a commercial kitchen for product development and limited-scale production. The cost to install a commercial kitchen is prohibitive for most producers. In addition, strict food safety regulations are making it harder for small producers to comply with standards in home-based kitchens. The result is that we have an impediment to growth for Connecticut agriculture, which this bill would address by making funds available for a kitchen incubator. The Connecticut Farm Bureau supports this important economic development initiative.